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REVIEWS

Elementary German Syntax Reviews with Exercises by B. Q. Morgan. Henry Holt and Co., 1916. 12mo., xv + 86 pp.

In 1882, Professor von Jagemann published his *Elements of German Syntax*. A companion volume of *Materials for German Composition* soon followed. In writing the *Syntax* the author had in mind the needs of teachers and students of German composition in so far as that term was synonymous with translation from the vernacular into German, the only method of composition in general favor at the time. His plan was to present the most important characteristics of German syntax from the point of view of the English language. By excluding everything uncommon and obvious he was able to treat important differences more fully and to illuminate them with numerous examples. The latter feature—abundant illustrative material—deserves special mention, it seems, for it has enhanced in no small degree the pedagogical value of a book that for a quarter of a century has had undisputed possession of its field.

Now Dr. Morgan's *Elementary German Syntax* enters the field as a competitor. Fundamentally, the two books are one in plan and purpose; yet the new publication has a rather good reason for its existence. Omitting most of the specifically lexicographical and other matter for which a need is less evident today, it is, in a stricter sense, a syntax. Secondly, it will carry wherever it goes some fresh light on the teaching of German grammar, especially on some of its more difficult chapters, e. g. the subjunctive. That the author has borrowed the light largely from other successful teachers and investigators should not in the least detract from the merit of the book. To each man his honest due, to Dr. Morgan the credit for clear thought and a somewhat rare power of concise, lucid exposition. Hence not the least of the book's merits is its "*Übersichtlichkeit*." Furthermore, it is not difficult to find on every page a painstaking attempt to eliminate the trivial, and to illuminate the important, and to attain brevity without sacrificing explicitness and clarity. Brevity he always attains, but there is a question in my mind whether it has not at times been made an end in itself rather than a means to an end. On this point, however, no one has a right to be dogmatic.

The subject matter is presented in 122 paragraphs so listed in the Contents as to compensate fully for the absence of an index. The paragraphs are grouped under the different parts of speech, a chapter on prepositions, however, is conspicuous for its absence. Yet the teacher's duty is only half done when the student knows what case to use in a given instance. A greater difficulty confronting him far beyond the elementary stage is what preposition to use, if any. To answer that question correctly, more attention must be given to the character of the word that precedes. The brief chapters that have been added on numerals and on orthographical rules including punctuation will serve a useful purpose. In lieu of a companion volume of materials there have been added fifteen *ungraded*, carefully selected syntactical exercises to aid the student in a practical mastery of the principles set down. How the author expects the student to acquire such mastery has been set forth at some length

in the preface, and let me say, both teacher and student will do wisely to heed the directions there given. Fractional preparation spells certain failure in the subsequent written work. Each exercise is designed to concentrate attention on one particular part of the *Syntax* indicated with paragraph references in the heading; other important syntactical difficulties involved are pointed out, however, by reference to the proper paragraphs of the *Syntax*. Occasionally a word may present two difficulties, two such instances have been noted in the text, to them a third might be added in view of its case, namely 'senses' (p. 64, 1. 7). An eight-page vocabulary immediately follows the exercises.

If we subtract the additions here (ca. 30 pp.) and the omissions there (ca. 85 pp.), the remainders will show a net reduction of thirty pages in a total of eighty-five. The sections on the noun, adverb and conjunction, infinitive, and verbal noun have each been boiled down to half or less than half their former proportions. The fifteen pages on word-order have shrunk to less than five. One subject has been treated somewhat more fully—the subjunctive. If we now ask if any gains have been made and we answer in the affirmative, as I believe we must, we shall also have to qualify our answer immediately by pointing out some of the possible improvements in details.

The desire to be brief, I believe, has led to some striking inaccuracies and omissions. Among them I note the following. First, the vowel that follows ss (ff), in German script, need not be short, as "between short vowels" implies; cf. aggressiv, Assessoren, Passau, Chaussee, Passagier, passieren and a score of others. The section on syllabication should state what to do with a single consonant between vowels, for the practice in English is misleading. Again, if a comma separates *all complete sentences* or clauses, no matter what their relation to each other (§5, a), one wonders where a freer use of the semicolon comes in (§ 4). As against *alle gute* present usage favors *alle guten*, therefore, if the intention is to show vacillating usage, *manche* would serve that purpose better (§ 9, 2). The relative superlative is always construed with the definite article, unless a dependent genitive precedes, but not, as stated, "except when dependent on a genitive" (§ 16). Strictly speaking, § 67, 5 belongs in its present form to the chapter on word-order, to justify its presence here, insert "such as *feind*, *fremd*, etc. . . ." after "Adjectives." It is somewhat difficult for me to see the purpose of a rule stating that some adjectives take a complementary genitive or dative and then leaving the character of such adjectives to be inferred from one example. Therefore, *bewusst*, *fähig*, *schuldig* and *voll* might be inserted in § 65.

But brevity, I suppose, forbids a multiplicity of examples. Of the several types of the uninflected adjective in common use none are illustrated save the somewhat poetical appositive (§ 10). The last clause of the rule for the position of the possessive genitive should perhaps read "unless it is a proper name", or else *die Tochter der alten Frau*, the first illustration under the rule, contradicts it. The objective genitive is represented by two examples, while no mention is made of the subjective genitive. *Einer der Männer* contains a partitive genitive, it is true, but does its genitive denote a part of something? *Er ist mir vorausgeeilt* would illustrate what *Ich habe es Ihnen vorausgesagt* (67, c) does not, namely a dative governed by the verb prefix. *Können* (96, 2b) and

mögen (98, 1a), are both said to convey the sense of a conceded possibility, but unless they be further differentiated may not the student justly infer that they are interchangeable? The ingenious grouping in § 95 may and may not lead him aright. Neither under the modal auxiliaries nor under word-order do I find any reference to the position of the transposed auxiliary with the so-called "double infinitive." Perhaps the reason is not far to seek, at all events not so far as that for the omission of the pluperfect tense, of the true imperative, of the infinitive and perfect participle in commands and directions, and, finally, of the position of the subordinate verb in clauses of the type: *Auch meinte er, sie könnten dem Weltkriege ruhig entgegensehen*". A reference to § 105 would in the last case have sufficed.

Let us pass on to the subjunctive. Dr. Morgan, I believe, is the first editor to follow the lead of Professor Prokosch in his conception of the subjunctive and the conditionals. The German subjunctive, he holds, is used to express four time ideas, *present, past, future and future perfect* time. Each is represented by two tense forms, called the *first* and *second present*, etc., the basis for the *first* forms being the present and for the *second* always the preterit stem. Thus *sei* and *wäre*, *habe* and *hätte*, *werde* and *würde* are absolutely identical in point of time, but in function only to a limited extent. What is true of the simple verbs is true also of the compound tenses in which they may appear as auxiliaries. How these forms may have arisen is a question that may still engage scholars, for us the important thing is that, from a pedagogical point of view, the new system is infinitely superior to the old. No teacher who has given the new a trial will desert it for the old. For convenience in drill and practice, Dr. Morgan suggests a system of naming the forms, but the system suggested is capable of improvement. Let the numeral 1 and 2 designate the forms and the letters *abcd* the four tenses. Then the *first* present would be *1a*, the *second* *2a*, and not as at present *1a* and *1b*, respectively. To have to associate *first* and *I* with different things is confusing and may be responsible for a typographical error on p. 51, 1.4 f. b., where we read *2b* for *1b*. *Werden* and *würde* should follow *habe* and *hätte* in the paradigms as they do in the text on page 47. Likewise on p. 51, the forms of *werden* should appear side by side with those of *haben*.

A few typographical errors have, of course, crept in. "And *so*" should be added to § 8, p. 5. One *Etwas* should be struck out on p. 6, 1.5 f. b.; and for "form" read "forms" on p. 52, last line.

The book is by its very title elementary in character; for the student who is sufficiently advanced in the study of German to derive any real benefit from translation it contains little that he *should* not know at the outset.

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A Trip to South America; exercises in Spanish composition, by S. M. Waxman. D. C. Heath & Co., 1916. iii + 100 pp. 50 cents.

This little composition book offers new material since it departs from the usual trip to Spain and takes the student to South America. It resembles